

ARE



YOU



PREPARED?

What you need to know to
prepare for disasters and
emergencies in Cass and
Clay counties

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Information resources

If you need assistance in an emergency, dial 911. The resources below are provided to assist you in your emergency planning.

**Cass Fargo
Emergency Management:**
Cassfargoemergency.com
701-476-4068

Cass County Sheriff:
Casscountynd.gov
701-241-5800

**Clay County Emergency
Management:**
Claycountymn.gov
218-299-7357

Clay County Public Health:
Claycountymn.gov
218-299-5220

Clay County Sheriff:
Claycountynd.gov
218-299-5151

Dilworth:
Dilworthcitymn.com
Fire: 218-287-2313
Police: 218-287-2666

Fargo:
Cityoffargo.com
Fire: 701-241-1540
Police: 701-241-1437

Fargo Cass Public Health:
Fargocasspublichealth.com
701-241-1360

Moorhead:
Cityofmoorhead.com
Fire: 218-299-5434
Police: 218-299-5120

**Moorhead Emergency
Management:**
701-299-5433

West Fargo:
Westfargo.org
Fire: 701-433-5380
Police: 701-433-5500

American Red Cross:
Redcross.org/local/nd
701-364-1800

**Statewide Information and
Referral:** (Minnesota and
North Dakota): Dial 211

“Call before you dig”:
Minnesota and North Dakota:
Dial 811

Poison Control Center:
1-800-222-1222



Social Media



The use of social media has allowed emergency messages to go out faster, and to a larger audience. When a disaster happens, local city/county social media outlets are the most credible source of information.

Cass-Fargo Emergency Management

Facebook: Cass County Emergency Management

City of West Fargo

Facebook: City of West Fargo-Government

Twitter: @CityofWestFargo

City of Dilworth

Facebook: City of Dilworth, Minnesota

Twitter: @cityofdilworth

Clay County Emergency Management

Facebook: Clay County Sheriff's Office

City of Fargo

Facebook: City of Fargo

Twitter: @cityoffargo

Clay County Public Health

Facebook: Clay-Wilkin Partnership 4Health

City of Moorhead

Facebook: City of Moorhead, Minnesota-City Government Page

Twitter: @cityofmoorhead

Fargo Cass Public Health

Facebook: Fargo Cass Public Health

Twitter: @FCPH



CodeRED

CodeRED is an automated notification system that can reach residents by phone, text, and email.

CodeRED alerts are issued for a variety of situations, including natural disasters, terrorism threats, gas leaks, water contamination, chemical spills, missing child alerts and general community notifications. CodeRED also has an optional severe weather warning feature from the National Weather Service.

To sign up for CodeRED system, go to rrrdc.com/codered/ or call 701-476-4068 for Cass County or 701-299-5151 for Clay County. Your information will only be used for CodeRED notification purposes.

Warnings and watches

A storm **watch** means a storm is possible in your area. When a watch is issued, listen to local radio and TV stations for additional information or visit **weather.gov**. Be alert to changing weather conditions and avoid unnecessary travel. A storm **warning** means a storm is headed for or is already in your area. When a storm warning is issued, safety experts recommend that you stay indoors; it's the best place to protect yourself.

Sirens

Outdoor warning sirens alert us to **chemical spills, severe weather and other outdoor emergencies**. When sirens sound, go indoors and turn on a local TV or radio station to find out what the threat is and how to protect yourself.

Do not assume there is no emergency because skies are clear.

Testing of the sirens occurs on the first Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. in Fargo, Dilworth and all of Clay County. The City of West Fargo tests its sirens daily at noon.

Special Needs Registries

Cass County

The North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, along with FirstLink, maintains the registry which allows emergency services to better serve the public during disasters by providing first responders with the information they need to adequately plan for and respond to disasters.

Residents with disabilities, older adults, and those with significant health issues, who are self-sufficient under normal circumstances, may have difficulties during disasters. This same challenge also applies to other special needs populations. All the personal information in the database is completely confidential.

For more information about this service or to register, call **FirstLink at 211** or go to **nd.gov/ndsnr/**

Clay County

The information gathered through this registry is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and will only be used during an emergency by Clay County Public Health and first responders.

Vulnerable populations include but are not limited to:

Behaviorally, mentally, or physically disabled

Frail or elderly

Homeless

Limited or non-English speaking

Medically or chemically dependent

Young Children



People who feel they cannot comfortably or safely access and use standard resources offered in a disaster.

To register, call Clay County Public Health at **218-299-5220**.

Make a plan and practice it

By preparing for emergencies, individuals, families and businesses can minimize property loss and injury and make the recovery process easier. Read this booklet to become more familiar with some of the hazards common to Cass and Clay counties. Then, develop a personalized plan that includes:

Escape routes—Draw a floor plan of your home or business and mark two escape routes from each room.

Meeting place—Select a predetermined meeting place away from your home or business; include pets in these plans. (see page 5)

Emergency communication—Your family or employees may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another. Choose someone out-of-town who can relay information. Make sure every person has all contact names, numbers and e-mail addresses.

Insurance and vital records—Obtain or update property, health and life insurance. Review existing policies to be sure you have sufficient coverage to meet your needs.

Special needs—If you or someone close to you has a disability or a special need, create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers that can provide aid in an emergency, and register them in a special needs registry (see page 6).

Check and update annually—Perform needed maintenance on your furnace, water heater, sump pump and air conditioning system each year. Review your emergency plan to make sure your contact list and escape routes are up-to-date. Check your emergency preparedness kit to make sure items are still in good shape



Build an emergency preparedness kit

Disasters can occur quickly and without warning. Assemble a kit designed to help you cope with a variety of emergencies.

Items for your kit:

- First aid kit, essential medications and a backup power source for any required medical equipment such as an oxygen tank
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries
- Canned food, manual can opener
- Bottled water (1 gallon of water per person per day for 3 days)
- Extra warm clothing including boots, mittens and a hat
- Red or brightly-colored cloth
- NOAA weather radio



A NOAA weather radio warns the public of severe weather and natural and manmade hazards from floods to forest fires to chemical spills. NOAA weather radios can be purchased from hardware, big box and farm supply stores, as well as online.

Consider preparing a kit for your car, boat and RV or camper. In addition to the items listed above, **a vehicle kit should include:**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • fire extinguisher. | • small tool kit. |
| • booster cables and tow rope. | • kitty litter or sand for tire traction. |
| • compass and road maps. | • nuts, granola bars |
| • shovel. | • toilet paper |
| • tire repair kit and pump. | • cell phone charger |
| • extra clothing to keep dry. | |
| • road flare. | |

For more information on building emergency kits, contact the American Red Cross at 701-364-1800 or go to ready.gov.

Pets and disaster

If you evacuate, the best way to protect your pets is to evacuate them, too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in them being injured, lost or worse.



Have a safe place to take your pets

Animal shelters will be set up during disasters. Location information will be distributed via traditional and social media outlets. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters.

Keep a list of “pet friendly” places, including phone numbers. Ask if “no pet” policies could be waived in an emergency at hotels, motels or a friend’s apartment.

- Ask relatives, friends or others outside the affected area if they could shelter your animals in their homes.
- Bring all pets into the house when an emergency begins so that you won’t have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification.

Birds and house lizards should be transported in a secure travel carrier. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo for identification and leg bands. Bring plenty of paper towels or newspaper to collect waste in the bottom of the cage.

Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad.

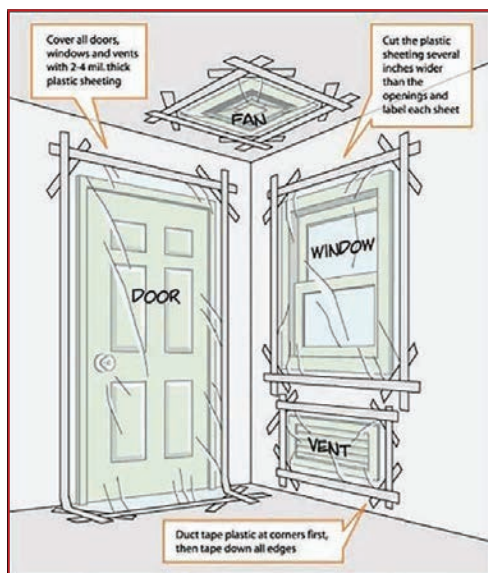
Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers. Take bedding materials, food bowls and water bottles.

Sheltering in place

One of the instructions you may be given when hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere is to “shelter-in-place”. This precaution aims to keep you safe by keeping you indoors. (This is not the same thing as going to a public shelter at a school or other location.)

Shelter-in-place means selecting a small interior room with no or few windows and taking refuge there.

It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building.



You might need to shelter-in-place if chemical, biological or radiological contaminants are released into the environment. If this happens, local authorities will provide information on TV and radio stations to help you protect yourself and your family. Keep a radio or TV on at work and at home so you can be alerted to hazardous conditions quickly.

Know how to shelter-in-place

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- If you're told there is danger of explosion, close window shades, blinds and curtains.
- Turn off all fans, as well as heating and air conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your emergency preparedness kit and radio.
- Go to an interior room **without** windows that's above ground level.
- Bring your pets with you.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Keep tuned to your radio or television until you are told all is safe.

Evacuation and community shelters

Local government officials issue evacuation orders when disaster threatens. Listen to local radio and TV reports when an emergency arises. If local officials ask you to leave, do so immediately!

If you only have moments to evacuate, grab the following:

- Medical supplies—prescription medications, diabetes test strips, etc.
- Eyeglasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution
- Emergency preparedness kit
- Clothing and bedding
- Car keys

If local officials haven't advised an immediate evacuation, take these steps to protect your home before you leave:

- Turn off electricity at the main fuse or breaker and turn off water at the main valve.
- Leave natural gas on unless local officials advise otherwise.
- If high winds are expected, cover the exterior of all windows.
- If flooding is expected, consider using sandbags to keep water away.
- Take important papers with you—driver's license, social security card, insurance policies, birth and marriage certificates, stocks, wills, etc.



Community shelters may be opened in certain emergencies or disasters. Local media and municipal social media sites will announce their locations. In most cases the shelter will provide only emergency items such as meals, cots and blankets. Be aware that pets (other than service animals) usually are not permitted in community shelters for health reasons.

Lightning and thunderstorms

If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately, and listen to local radio and TV stations for information and instructions. Make sure your NOAA weather radio is turned on.

When a storm approaches, unplug appliances and turn off the air conditioner. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances, and do not take a bath or shower.



If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees. If you are **boating or swimming,** get to land and find shelter immediately!

If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Seek shelter immediately.

If you can't find shelter, go to a low lying, open place away from trees, poles or metal objects. Squat low to the ground, and place your hands on your knees with your head between them. **Do not lie flat on the ground!**

After the storm passes, stay away from storm-damaged areas. Listen to the radio or watch local TV stations for information and instructions.

If someone is struck by lightning, he or she does **not** carry an electrical charge and can be handled safely. Call 911 and give first aid.

Basic first aid skills can be invaluable, so learn them now. First aid classes are taught at:

- Redcross.org/local/nd or call 800-252-6746
- Fmambulance.com/cpr or call 701-364-1750

Tornadoes

Pick a place where family members could gather if a tornado is headed your way. Basements are best; if you don't have one, choose a center hallway, bathroom or closet on the lowest floor.

If you are outside, hurry to the basement or a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.

If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and head for safety.

After the tornado, watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged area. Listen to the radio or watch local TV stations for information and instructions.



If you don't have a basement, a bathroom on the lowest floor of your home is a good place to seek shelter during a tornado. Be sure to take your weather radio into your temporary shelter.

Downed power lines

If you come across a downed power line, leave the area immediately and seek help by calling 911.

If you are in a vehicle when a power line falls onto it, wait inside the vehicle until help arrives. If you must leave the vehicle because of fire or life-threatening injury:

- ✓ Leap from the vehicle, landing on both feet.
- ✓ Do not hold onto the door while leaping.
- ✓ Once on the ground, hop away—do not run.



Drink plenty of water during a heat wave and eat smaller, more frequent meals.

Heat waves

Dangers we face during periods of very high temperatures include:

Heat cramps: These are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They are an early signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.

Heat exhaustion: This typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated, the victim may suffer heat stroke.

Heat stroke (sunstroke): Heat stroke is life threatening.

The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.

If a heat wave is predicted or happening...

- **Slow down.** Avoid strenuous activity.
- **Stay indoors** as much as possible.
- **Wear** lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- **Drink** plenty of water regularly and often.
- **Eat** small meals and eat more often.
- **Avoid** using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.

If you do not have air conditioning, stay with friends or family, or go to public places such as community centers, churches, and shopping malls.

Do not leave pets outside in extreme heat without shade and water!

Winter storms and extreme cold

Before a storm comes, have extra blankets on hand and ensure that each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves or mittens, a warm hat and warm, water-resistant boots.

During a storm, avoid going outside. If you must, wear several layers of lightweight clothing—this will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from cold air and debris.

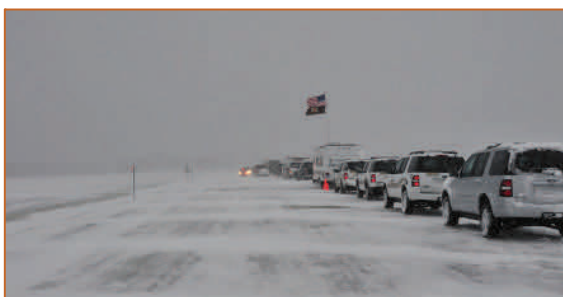
You should **avoid traveling by car** in a storm, but **if you must:**

- Carry an emergency preparedness kit in your car.
- Keep your car's gas tank full.
- Let someone know your destination, route and estimated time of arrival.

If you become stranded in a vehicle...

- Stay with your car. Do not try to walk to safety.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see.
- Start the car and run the heater for about 10 minutes every hour.
- Keep one window (away from the wind) slightly open to let air in.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen.
- As you sit, move your arms and legs to keep blood circulating and stay warm.

If you shovel snow after the storm, be careful not to overexert yourself. Strenuous activity in cold weather can put a strain on your heart.



Fire safety

Wildfires often begin unnoticed and spread quickly, igniting brush, trees and homes. Reduce the risk of a wildfire occurring in your area by:

- adhering to any burning bans that are in effect.
- calling 911 to report grass fires or other types of outdoor burning.
- teaching children about fire safety and keeping matches and lighters out of their reach.

Design and landscape your home with wildfire safety in mind. Select materials and plants that can help contain fire rather than fuel it. Use fire resistant or noncombustible materials on the roof and exterior structure of the building.

Plant fire resistant shrubs or trees. Create a 30 to 50-foot safety area around your home by raking up leaves and twigs. Clear all flammable vegetation. Remove branches that extend over the roof. Ask the power company to clear branches from powerlines.

Clear a 10-foot area around propane tanks and grills. Stack firewood at least 100 feet away and uphill from your home or business. Maintain an adequate outside water source. Have a garden hose long enough to reach any area on your property. Install exterior water outlets on at least two sides of the home.

Home fire safety begins with installing a **smoke alarm** outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home. If people in your home sleep with doors closed, install smoke alarms inside sleeping areas.

Test smoke alarms once a month and **replace** all batteries at least once a year. Replace alarms every 10 years.

Have one or more fire extinguishers in your home. Contact your local fire department for advice on which types work best. See page 3 for the fire department's phone number.

Fire Safety for Kids: Sparky.org

Blackouts

Before the blackout...

- If you have an electric garage door opener, locate the manual release lever and learn how to operate it.
- Keep your car's gas tank at least half full; gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- Have an extra battery on hand for battery-operated wheelchairs.
- Have a cell phone charging cord for a vehicle.

During the blackout...

- Only use a flashlight for emergency lighting—never use candles because they increase your risk of a house fire dramatically.
- Most cordless phones won't work if the power goes out, so be sure to have a standard telephone in your home. Cellular phones may not operate properly during a blackout because cellular networks may lose power to the towers that transmit your call.
- Turn off electrical equipment you were using when the power went out. Leave one light on so you'll know when power returns.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer. Most medication that requires refrigeration can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours.
- Don't run a generator inside a home or garage or connect it to a home's electrical system. If you use a generator, connect the equipment you want to power directly to outlets on the generator.
- Listen to a radio for the latest information.



Have a battery operated radio available to listen to weather announcements and black-out information.

Natural gas emergencies

You can help prevent natural gas emergencies by calling the locator service (811 in North Dakota and Minnesota) before you dig on your property. This will help you avoid hitting gas lines.

If you smell gas outdoors, move away from the area until you no longer smell the gas and call 911. Do not return to the area until authorities tell you it is safe to do so.

If you smell gas indoors, get outside immediately, leaving doors open to help ventilate the building. Do not use light switches, electrical appliances or phones (cell or land line) in the affected home or building. Extinguish cigarettes and do not light matches. Move a safe distance from the home and call 911. Do not return to the area until appropriate authorities tell you it is safe to do so.

Floods and flash flooding

Now is the time to determine your area's flood risk. If you are not sure whether you live in a floodplain, contact your local government to find out. If you are in a floodplain, consider buying flood insurance.

When a **flood watch** is issued, move your furniture and valuables to higher floors in your home. Prepare for possible evacuation.

When a **flood warning** is issued, listen to the radio or watch local TV stations for information and instructions.

When a **flash flood warning** is issued, move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains.

Do not drive around barricades. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.



During a flash flood warning, do not drive around barricades or attempt to drive down streets that are covered by water. Underestimating the water's depth could be a deadly mistake.

Chemical emergencies

Under certain conditions, chemicals which are normally safe can be poisonous or harmful to your health. A major chemical emergency is an accident that releases a hazardous amount of a chemical into the environment. Accidents can happen underground, on railways or highways, and at manufacturing plants. They may involve fire or explosion, or you may be unable to see or smell anything.



Many trains carrying dangerous chemicals pass through Cass and Clay counties every day. What are your plans in case of a derailment/chemical spill?

You may be exposed to a chemical by:

- breathing the chemical.
- swallowing contaminated food, water or medication.
- touching the chemical, or coming into contact with clothing or other items that have touched the chemical.

If you are outdoors during a large-scale hazardous material release, stay upwind or upstream of the release and find shelter immediately.

Many people think of chemicals as only those substances used in manufacturing processes. But chemicals are found everywhere—in our kitchens, medicine cabinets, basements and garages. **The most common home chemical emergencies involve small children eating medicines.** Keep all medicines, cosmetics, cleaning products and other household chemicals out of sight and reach of children. If your child eats or drinks a non-food substance, find any containers immediately and take them to the phone. Call the poison control center (see page 1 for number) or 911 and carefully follow the instructions you are given.

Home product precautions

- Avoid mixing household chemicals.
- Always read the directions before using a new product.
- Never smoke while using household chemicals.
- Clean up chemical spills immediately, protecting your eyes and skin.
- Dispose of products properly to protect our environment and wildlife.



Public health emergencies

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

A public health emergency includes disease outbreaks, biological or chemical emergencies, and natural disasters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourage you to prepare an all-hazards emergency kit that could be used during any disaster. See page 8 for information on building an emergency kit.

A bioterrorism attack is the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria or other germs (called “agents”) used to cause illness or death in people, animal or plants. Biological agents can be spread through the air, through water or in food. Terrorists may use biological agents because they can be extremely difficult to detect and may not cause illness for several hours to several days. Some bioterrorism agents, like the smallpox virus, can be spread from person to person and some, like anthrax, cannot.

Fargo Cass Public Health and Clay County Public Health have plans to distribute medications and give vaccinations to the general public during a public health emergency. Mass dispensing sites will be announced publicly at the time of an emergency.



In a public health emergency, clinics may be set up to provide vaccinations or medications to the public

Pandemic planning

The local Cass-Clay Community Health Collaborative develops response plans for possible illness outbreaks such as pandemic influenza and Ebola. The group is made up of representatives from Cass and Clay counties, including public health agencies, hospitals, nursing homes, first responders university/college health agencies, mass care facilities and clinics.